

CONTROLLING THE FOOD SUPPLIES 1347

France were at the time very low, but I recognised that every effort must be made at this critical moment to keep Italy contented, and we accordingly arranged to send to Italy the oats we had purchased from the United States for our own army, and replenish our own supplies in France from such stocks as were available in Great Britain and in Ireland.

There can be little question that our Continental Allies failed to carry out anything in the way of food control at all comparable with the firmly organised measures we adopted in this country.

At French Cabinet for 14th February, 1918,

amazed at our the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs *rationing* stated that the French Ambassador had *system* expressed serious misgivings in regard to the British food supply, and doubted whether the British people would be content with the proposed scale of rations. The French had tried the plan of limiting prices, and it had failed completely, with the result that another system had had to be adopted.

On 24th April, 1918, we had to consider an urgent appeal from Italy for more wheat. The situation was that the arrivals of wheat in each of the Allied countries were short of the programme in approximately the same proportion, but that the difference between the French and ourselves on the one hand, and Italy on the other, was that we had begun the

year with several weeks' supply in reserve, and that the French had now been obliged to admit that they also had had several, though not quite as many, weeks' stock in reserve. The Italians, on the other hand, had no reserve and had actually impinged on the new harvest before the new cereal year had commenced. They had just enough, if no exceptional